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QUALITY ASSURANCE of CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

QACHE PROJECT

Country Report

FRANCE



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drafting an overview of the Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE) exported by France is not an easy task, for several reasons. The French higher education scene is complex and changing, as are the associated quality assurance processes. While a strong commitment to higher education and international cooperation can be discerned at a national level, this does not involve CBHE as such.

Despite the research carried out for this report, it has not been possible to find a legal, or even a generally accepted, definition of CBHE in France, or to obtain reliable overall statistics. Consequently, the French cross-border offer is here addressed via non-exhaustive data pertaining to:

- double degrees/joint degrees,
- campuses abroad,
- the involvement of French universities in founding foreign universities.

While institutions seem quite active in these areas, the results obtained are only partial and do not provide an overview of what CBHE represents for France.

The role of French quality assurance agencies is even more complex. How do you evaluate a service that is not listed as such? Can quality agencies, whose funding gives them a national remit, perform evaluations with effects that will be outside France? The quality assurance agencies AERES, CTI, and CEFDG cover some aspects of CBHE, but not all its effects.

Despite French success in exporting courses and creating facilities, numerous challenges remain. What system of national or international regulation can be adopted? Is the current flexibility, which aims to promote international cooperation, able to ensure the safety and quality of the educational offer? Should the role of quality agencies be extended? If so, how should this be coordinated? What expectations do institutions have: help in the development of all aspects of these activities, or a process of making safe and ensuring quality?

CHAPTER 1 - CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION OFFERED BY EXPORTING PROVIDERS IN FRANCE – STATE OF ART

French CBHE takes multiple forms. Some results from historical initiatives, other initiatives offer one-off support and lead bodies vary (institutions, Government ministries, agencies, etc.). Characterising the French cross-border offer is particularly complex, because there does not seem to be an existing collection of quantitative data or exhaustive information. While there have been one-off or partial initiatives (such as surveys, database queries, and publication of directories), these have not been kept up to date, or extended to the national level.

An additional difficulty compounds this observation: the information is generally obtained on the basis of declarations from institutions, in the absence of an agreed definition of CBHE in the wider sense. For example, “courses abroad” do not necessarily mean the same thing to all the institutions questioned. Similarly, the type of legal relationship or form of cooperation is not systematically specified. The information that follows is therefore fragmentary and subject to caution.

For this study, it was decided to distinguish between:

- degrees under international partnerships,
- campuses abroad¹,
- the involvement of French universities in founding foreign universities.

1.1 DEGREES UNDER INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

1.1.1 A PRINCIPLE IN REACH OF ALL INSTITUTIONS

This concerns the formulation adopted under French Decree 2005-450 dated 11 May 2005, pertaining to the awarding of degrees in international partnerships, and is the legal basis of supervised cross-border partnerships.

According to Article 4 of the Decree cited above, “in the context of international partnerships, partner institutions may:

- either award a joint degree;
- or each award their own degree simultaneously.

Joint degrees awarded are fully recognised in France. This should also be the case for the partner country or countries. The agreement signed under Article 2 shall specify the methods for this recognition”.

The creation and implementation of these degrees therefore depends on each higher education institution and its own partners.

¹ Report MAE 37-INS / MESR 2014-003 “*La coordination de l’action internationale en matière d’enseignement supérieur et de recherche* (Coordination of international action for higher education and research)”.

1.1.2 A DIFFICULT INVENTORY

To date, the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) has not produced a database to specifically identify all these degrees under international partnerships, or to identify the type of partnership, although such degrees seem to be widely awarded by institutions². These institutions, both universities and *grandes écoles*, generally choose to list these degrees on their websites and promote them. Similarly, the nature of these partnerships is not always identifiable on their websites.

Several one-off initiatives have produced some inventories, although these remain partial:

- Directory of French higher education abroad, MAEE DGCID 2006.
- An overview by *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF)³.
- The Euroguidance⁴ website: a list of courses with links, providing an inventory of double and joint degrees, listed by partnership member country. It is therefore limited to the EU, and does not aim to be exhaustive.
- The websites of French embassies abroad: these generally present the local offshore education offer⁵.
- A survey performed by EduFrance in 2005, according to which 67% of institutions that responded acknowledged having an offshore education policy for their degrees⁶.
- Survey on courses abroad, performed by the Conference of University Presidents (CPU) in April 2006⁷. “Of the 28 institutions that replied (out of 102 questioned), 24 declared that they had courses abroad, and only 4 that they did not have any⁸”.
- The Mobility 2013 survey performed by *Conférence des Grandes Écoles* (CGE)⁹ covering the 2011-2012 academic year and 191 *Grandes Écoles*, of which 175 replied. It provides a list of campuses abroad, and the number of foreign and French students with double or joint degrees, by country and by course.

Given this sparse and sometimes already dated information, AERES attempted to produce an inventory of institutions that have international partnership courses, in the context of the work performed under the QACHE project.

² For example, in its latest survey, the CGE estimates that “among the 6500 agreements signed by the institutions, over 800 concerned double degrees, joint degrees or joint supervision of doctoral theses”.

³ See below.

⁴ Website of the European network of national centres for resources for orientation and mobility, jointly funded by the European Commission, [http://www.euroguidance-france.org/upload/UserFiles/File/EUROPE/Cursus_int-gr-s\(1\).pdf](http://www.euroguidance-france.org/upload/UserFiles/File/EUROPE/Cursus_int-gr-s(1).pdf) (in French)

⁵ For example, the website of the French Embassy in Spain: <http://www.ambafrance-es.org/Les-doubles-diplomes-franco> (in French)

⁶ Source: “*Les formations supérieures délocalisées à l'étranger : la situation française* (Offshore education: the French situation)”, *Les Notes de CampusFrance*, No. 10, October 2007.

⁷ Internal unpublished document.

⁸ Source: “*Les formations supérieures délocalisées à l'étranger : la situation française* (Offshore education: the French situation)”, *Les Notes de CampusFrance*, No. 10, October 2007.

⁹ <http://www.cge.asso.fr/actualites/enquete-mobilite-2013-de-la-cge> (in French)

The French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR) has a database of accredited courses. This is populated via declarations from institutions when they submit their degrees for initial accreditation or renewal, in the context of a contractual dialogue.

The figures below correspond to a database query for all degrees (Bachelor's Courses or Master's Programmes) that have at least one international partnership (type of partnership not specified), whose accreditation was awarded or renewed in 2013 or 2014. (Accreditation is valid for 5 years). The total number of degrees whose accreditation was awarded or renewed in 2013 or 2014 is 3,731 (Degree Courses or Master's Programmes).

Total number of degrees whose accreditation was awarded or renewed in 2013 or 2014	Number of degrees accredited in 2013 or 2014, with at least one international partner
3731	249

Among these 249 degrees with at least one international partner, the following details may be noted:

Distribution of degrees with at least one international partner by disciplinary field.

Disciplinary field	Number of accredited degrees with at least one international partner	%
All fields	249	100
ALL* (Art, Literature, Languages)	37	15
DEG* (Law, Economics, Management)	40	16
SHS* (Humanities and Social Sciences)	56	22
STS* (Science, Technology, Healthcare)	118	47

*The categorisation of fields is that used in the MESR database.

Distribution of degrees with at least one international partner, by geographical area.

Geographical area involved in the partnership	Number of accredited degrees with at least one international partner
All geographical areas combined	249
Europe (countries other than France)	153
North Africa	22
Sub-Saharan Africa	11
Near and Middle East	18
Asia	27
North America	48
South America	20

The main export area for French university education is Europe. However, North America is also very attractive for French institutions.

It is probably possible to obtain an exhaustive, more detailed mapping of French cross-border education, but this would require more arduous work in grouping and comparing data, and would mean involving several other parties.

1.1.3 GEOGRAPHICAL AND STRATEGIC CHOICES

Despite the absence of an overview, certain strategic themes can be seen in the choices made by institutions in the development of double or joint degree courses.

A) FRENCH-SPEAKING WORLD

These are often higher education institutions, whose courses are given in French, in countries that have been historically French-orientated or associated with French colonial history. The objective is to promote both use of the French language and French methods of teaching and research.

For example:

- Centres for European Studies: such as the Franco-Romanian Law College of Bucharest University Law Faculty (double degree with University of Paris I), and the Franco-Belarusian Centre for European Studies (double degree with Bordeaux IV).
- French-speaking departments or faculties within universities: in Europe and the Middle East, notably in Egypt¹⁰. The AUF has a list of these faculties on its website¹¹, but does not distinguish between those that offer a double or joint degree and those that don't.
- "University courses taught in French", as defined by the AUF¹², which covers both double degree courses and courses abroad (i.e. only awarding a French degree). Under certain conditions, if suitably recognised by a commission of experts, these courses can benefit from certain types of AUF support (such as grants, help with relocation, and logistic support). On its website, the AUF offers a range of higher education courses given wholly or partially in French within institutions that are members of the AUF¹³.

B) PARTNERSHIPS WITH WORLD-RANKING RESEARCH CENTRES

¹⁰ For example: The Department of Management and International Commerce (DGCI, University of Ain Chams, degrees from Poitiers University and Paris IX), Institute of International Business Law (IDAI, Cairo University, Paris I degree), Francophone section within the Law School of Ain Chams University (Lyon III degree), Alexandria Francophone Department of Management (DFGA, University of Alexandria, Poitiers University degree), Francophone Management Section within the Arabic Academy of Science and Technology in Alexandria, in partnership with the Rennes and Caen Business Schools, Francophone Section within the Law School of Alexandria University (partnership with Grenoble II).

¹¹ <http://www.auf.org/les-services-de-l-auf/etudiants/etudier-en-francais/filieres/>
With more specific examples for Vietnam:

http://www.auf.org/media/IMG2/pdf/To_gap_Tieng_phap_reduit.pdf

or Laos <http://www.auf.org/media/adminfiles/2012-FUF-LaosF.pdf> (all in French).

¹² "Guide de préparation d'un projet de formation universitaire francophone (Guidelines for preparing a project for French-speaking university education)", Offshore Master's, AUF, *Bureau Asie Pacifique*, 2012

¹³ <https://cartographie.auf.org/> (in French)

This is a priority shared by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE)¹⁴ and MESR. In particular, several types of action can be cited, sometimes supported by specific funding, especially from the MAE, directed towards countries that are scientific partners of France:

- to the USA: the Alliance programme¹⁵ (University of Paris I, Ecole Polytechnique, Sciences Po, and Columbia University in the City of New York), with several double and joint degrees in particular.
- to Canada: an example of joint supervision of doctoral students under the Frontenac¹⁶ programme;
- to the UK: with university networks including a significant research element (the “oldest and most active network, with four double-degree Master’s Programmes, is Sciences Po/London School of Economics and Political Science, which has since been joined by many others: Cambridge, Oxford/*Ecole normale Supérieure* (ENS), Imperial College London/*Polytechnique*, Cambridge/*Ecole Centrale*, King’s College London/University of Paris I, University College London/University of Paris VI/ENS, Lille I, II, III/University of Kent’s Transmanche Programme¹⁷”) and the website of the French Embassy in the UK, which in 2007 listed approximately 240 Franco-British double degrees¹⁸ ;
- to Germany: since 1997, the Franco-German University¹⁹ has accredited high-quality 150 Franco-German and trinational courses, along with postgraduate studies; the website of the French Embassy in Germany also lists several Franco-German initiatives that pursue the same objective²⁰.

C) COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Here, the work of the MAE should be highlighted, in particular via the Priority Solidarity Fund (FSP), which is used to fund cooperation in the context of development aid. “In the field of higher education, MAE funded 26 FSP projects in developing countries in 2009, at a total cost of €60m²¹”. While the primary objective of these projects was not the creation of double or joint degrees, this was sometimes the case:

- The “2iE” FSP, with €6m funding for an inter-State project to transform a group of faculties into an Excellence Institute for Water Engineering and the Environment, involving Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, C.A.R., Chad, Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. In the context of this project, education was designed using the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system and accredited by the *Commission des Titres d’Ingénieur* (CTI); several double degrees exist. These include INSA de Rennes and 2iE, with the creation of a double degree in Civil and Urban Engineering²², and Mines Albi-Carmaux.

¹⁴ “La coopération française dans l’enseignement supérieur (French cooperation in higher education)”, MAE, 2012.

¹⁵ <http://alliance.columbia.edu/>

¹⁶ <http://www.consulfrance-quebec.org/Frontenac-partenariat-pour> (in French)

¹⁷ <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/Les-reseaux-existants> (in French)

¹⁸ <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/Doubles-diplomes-franco> (in French)

¹⁹ <http://www.dfh-ufa.org/fr/formations/> (in French)

²⁰ <http://www.ambafrance-de.org/Ecoles-francaises-education-et> (in French)

²¹ <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/cooperation-educative/les-actions-de-cooperation-dans-l-renforcer-les-capacites-de-pays/article/le-fonds-de-solidarite-prioritaire> (in French)

²² <http://www.insa-rennes.fr/actualites/details-actualite/actualite/nouveau-double-diplome-en-afrique-de-louest.html> (in French).

- The FSP to support medical higher education in Laos: this ultimately led to the creation of a double degree between Montpellier 2 University (in collaboration with CIRAD) and Kasetsart University in Bangkok²³.
- The “ARESM” FSP to support reform of higher education in Morocco, which has promoted the development of cooperation between French and Moroccan Universities since 2004, in particular joint degrees, with the IT Master’s Programme for offshore development of IT systems (a double degree with the University of Western Brittany (in Brest) and nine Moroccan universities: Agadir, Casablanca, El Jadida, Fes, Kenitra, Marrakech, Settat, Rabat and Tangiers²⁴).

1.2 CAMPUSES ABROAD

The term “campuses abroad” refers to the development of an institution in a foreign country and not to the type of degree awarded. It may therefore refer both to degrees in international partnership²⁵ and to more flexible forms of cooperation.

A 2014 joint report²⁶ by the general inspectorate of foreign affairs and the administrative inspectorate of education provides a list:

- “In North Africa and the Middle East:

- the ESA Business School, founded jointly in 1996 by the MAE, the Paris Chamber of Commerce and the Bank of Lebanon²⁷;
- the ESAA Business School, founded in 2004 by the MAE, University of Lille II, Euromed Management, ESCP Europe and the French and Algerian Chambers of Commerce²⁸;
- more recently, the French Arabian School of Management and Finance, founded in Manama (Bahrain) by ESSEC Business School and the Arabian Gulf University²⁹;
- INSEAD Business School has founded various campuses around the world, including those in Abu Dhabi (2007) and Singapore (2010), alongside a Centre in Israel (2006) and an MBA partnership with Tsinghua University in Beijing.

- In Asia:

- the Franco-Vietnamese centre for management training (CFVG) located in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi³⁰. The CFVG is supported by Vietnamese universities, the Paris Chamber

²³ <http://www.ambafrance-laos.org/Premier-anniversaire-du-FSP-d> (in French).

²⁴ http://formations.univ-brest.fr/fiche/FR_RNE_0290346U_PROG6845/FR_RNE_0290346U_PROG20271/presentation (in French).

²⁵ See the definition above.

²⁶ Report MAE 37-INS / MESR 2014-003 “*La coordination de l’action internationale en matière d’enseignement supérieur et de recherche* (Coordination of international action for higher education and research)”.

²⁷ Hosts students on seven Master’s Programmes and has a network of 2,300 graduates.

²⁸ Hosts students on three Master’s Programmes and offers bespoke training.

²⁹ Offers an MBA.

of Commerce and numerous French Partners: ESCP Europe, Paris Dauphine University, University of Lille Nord de France, IAE (Paris), EM (Strasbourg), Rouen business school, and the School of Knowledge Economy and Management (SKEMA);

- already mentioned above for North Africa and the Middle East, ESSEC, which has been present in Singapore since 2005, is opening a new campus there in 2014;
- in China, French institutions have founded autonomous facilities attached to Chinese universities, mostly with MAE support:
 - 1999: the Franco-Chinese institute of engineering and management (IFCIM), founded by ENPC ParisTech engineering school and Tongji University, with the financial assistance of about a dozen French companies³¹;
 - 2005: the Sino-European School of Technology of Shanghai University (UTSEUS), a partnership between the University of Shanghai and three French technology universities (UTBM, UTC, and UTT);
 - 2005: *École centrale de Pékin*, founded by Centrale Graduate School and Beihang University in Beijing with the status of an autonomous department. Funding is provided by the French Ministry of Education (MEN), MESR, the engineering schools in the consortium, and industry³²;
 - 2007: the Sino-European Institute of Aviation Engineering (SIAE) in Tianjin, which is an autonomous department of the Civil Aviation University of China (CAUC). This institute, which is supported by a consortium of four French engineering schools (including ENAC, ISAE Toulouse and ISAE-ENSMA), benefits from joint Chinese and French funding (industry, DGAC, MESR, MAE and the ministry of defence)³³;
 - 2010: the Sino-French Institute of Nuclear Engineering and Technology (IFCEN), which is an autonomous department of Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, with the support of a consortium of eight French institutions. This institute is funded by industry, French ministries (MESR, MAE, energy and industry), and the consortium on the French side, and by investment and operation on the Chinese side³⁴;
 - 2010: the Franco-Chinese Institute of Renmin University (IFCRenmin), which is part of the People's University of China³⁵. Funding comes from French and Chinese partners;

³⁰ Since 1992, it offers an MBA accredited under the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) Programme Accreditation System (EPAS), and more recently two specialist Master's Programmes and an initial-training or continuing-education doctoral student programme.

³¹ This autonomous institute has awarded an International MBA since 2000.

³² Modest fees are paid by the 672 students (the first graduations were in January 2012). The degrees awarded are Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from Beihang University and the title *Ingénieur Centrale Pékin*, recognised by the CTI. An associated research laboratory was founded in 2010 (with the CNRS).

³³ Awards a double degree of Chinese Master's and French Engineer degrees (subject to CTI accreditation) to around one hundred students per year.

³⁴ Awards a Chinese university Bachelor's Degree and a double degree of Chinese Master's and French Engineer degree (subject to CTI accreditation) to around one hundred students per year.

³⁵ This institute awards Master's Degrees in economic and management sciences, law and political science with the support of a consortium of three French institutions (Paris IV, Montpellier 2 and Euromed management).

- 2012: the Shanghai-ParisTech Elite Institute of Technology (SPEIT), which is an autonomous department of Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and supported by a consortium of four PRES ParisTech institutions (including Polytechnique, Mines Telecom and ENSTA)³⁶. The fields involved are mechanical engineering, ICT, and electrical engineering;
- 2012: the Sino-European institute for clean and renewable energies (ICARE) in association with the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan³⁷. In 2012, the CNAM graduate school signed an agreement with Wuhan University to found a Franco-Chinese institute of engineering and management, which specialises in continuing education.”

Some newly founded institutions can be added to this list:

- *Mahindra Ecole Centrale* in India, founded by *Ecole Centrale de Paris* in partnership with the company Mahindra; the school had its first intake in 2014, and currently serves Indian students only.
- In Morocco, the first intake of *Centrale Casablanca*, also founded by *Ecole Centrale de Paris*, should take place in September 2015.
- “INSA Euro-Méditerranée is the first public higher education and research institution dedicated to engineering on a Euro-Mediterranean scale. Located on the campus of the future Fes Euro-Mediterranean University, from Autumn 2015, it will receive its first intake of students from all countries around the Mediterranean, with the longer-term ambition of opening up to Sub-Saharan Africa. It will offer professional training for the aeronautics, energy, mechanics and automobile sectors, and a degree recognised in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East³⁸”.

1.3 INVOLVEMENT OF FRENCH UNIVERSITIES IN THE FOUNDING OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES³⁹

Several French universities have participated in the foundation of mainly-French-speaking universities, with the support of the MESR and MAE, as part of the French tradition of spreading its culture, and scientific and university cooperation.

³⁶ The students (target number: 100) will be awarded a Bachelor’s Degree and, after 6 years, a Chinese Master of Engineering Degree, along with a SPEIT Engineering degree (subject to CTI accreditation).

³⁷ The Master’s programme aims to train approximately 150 Chinese students annually and to award the double degree of a Chinese and European Master’s Degree. ICARE project funding is planned so that each year, following their first year on the Master’s Course in China, ten Chinese students can take their second year in Europe, in particular for the “*Master 2 Energies Renouvelables* (second year Master’s in renewable energies)” course.

³⁸ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid82336/lancement-officiel-du-premier-institut-de-technologie-euro-mediterraneen.html> (in French).

³⁹ List given in Report MAE 37-INS / MESR 2014-003 “*La coordination de l’action internationale en matière d’enseignement supérieur et de recherche* (Coordination of international action for higher education and research)”.

1.3.1 GALATASARAY UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY

Galatasaray University was founded by an intergovernmental agreement in April 1992, and France has contributed €35m over 10 years⁴⁰. In January 2014⁴¹, it was visited by the French President who spoke of the importance of this partnership for France. The university has five faculties and currently hosts 1500 students who follow courses in French, with a handful of exceptions. The participation of French Universities is expressed via a supporting consortium⁴², which can contribute to producing curricula and developing Franco-Turkish cooperation.

1.3.2 UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HANOI (USTH), VIETNAM

Via a 2009 intergovernmental agreement, the objective for USTH was to found a “new model of university” together the Hanoi University of Science and Technology. It targets high-level research in a context of cutting-edge businesses⁴³. It is the only Vietnamese university to have adopted the Bologna Process⁴⁴. For the 2013 intake, 600 students were enrolled. Six Master’s Courses are jointly accredited with France. While the working language at USTH is English, French language and culture are systematically taught.

The USTH project is monitored by a Steering Committee, which includes representatives of MAE, MESR, CPU, CDEFI, research bodies and a consortium of French institutions.

This consortium includes 57 French higher education institutions and research bodies, grouping together “French research and teaching excellence⁴⁵”. In particular, its objectives include developing USTH and promoting Franco-Vietnamese cooperation.

1.3.3 FRENCH UNIVERSITY IN ARMENIA (UFAR)

Founded by a 1995 intergovernmental agreement, UFAR follows a similar pattern with a French-speaking base, participation of University of Lyon III in the Board of Directors, and Franco-Armenian educational and administrative management⁴⁶.

1.3.4 FRENCH UNIVERSITY OF EGYPT (UFE)

Founded in 2002 at the initiative of Presidents Chirac and Mubarak, and governed by a cooperation agreement with MAE, the UFE was inaugurated in 2006. It functions on a trilingual basis⁴⁷ (French,

⁴⁰ Source: “*Atouts et ajustements de l’outil de coopération français en Turquie* (Benefits from and adjustments to French cooperation in Turkey)”, *Rapport d’information au Sénat*, M. Chaumont, no. 395 (2003-2004) - 30 June 2004.

⁴¹ Source: Speech given to students at Galatasaray University during President Hollande’s State Visit to Turkey, January 2014, <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/discours-devant-les-etudiants-a-l-universite-de-galatasaray/> (in French).

⁴² The members of the consortium are listed on the Galatasaray University website, <http://consortium.gsu.edu.tr/> (in French).

⁴³ Source: “*La coopération française dans l’enseignement supérieur* (French cooperation in higher education)”, MAE, 2012.

⁴⁴ “*USTH Bilan 2010-2013* (Evaluation of USTH, 2010-2013)”, *Conseil d’Université*, Paris, June 2013.

⁴⁵ USTH website, <http://www.usth.edu.vn/fr/consortium/> (in French).

⁴⁶ UFAR website: http://ufar.am/U/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=30&lang=fr (in French).

English and Arabic) and offers double degrees in partnership with New Sorbonne University (Paris III), Nantes University, Pierre-and-Marie-Curie University (Paris VI), Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse, and the Universities of Haute Alsace and Corsica for engineering.

1.3.5 PARIS SORBONNE UNIVERSITY IN ABU DHABI (UPSAD)

Founded in 2006 on the basis of a partnership with Paris-Sorbonne University and funding from the Emirate, UPSAD offers degrees “awarded in France by Paris-Sorbonne University and accredited by MESR, in the United Arab Emirates and France⁴⁸”. Collaborations also exist with Paris-Descartes and Pierre-and-Marie-Curie University. Although it is an Emirates institution, UPSAD is “under the academic supervision of Paris-Sorbonne University⁴⁹”. The President of Paris-Sorbonne University is also Chairman of the Board and Chancellor for UPSAD.

1.3.6 INSTITUT TUNIS-DAUPHINE (ITD)

ITD is a public limited company under Tunisian Law, with a third of the capital held by Paris Dauphine University⁵⁰. Teaching staff from Paris Dauphine participate in teaching at ITD. “The Degree and Master’s Certificates awarded by ITD are recognised by Paris Dauphine University as its own degrees; they are also recognised by the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research⁵¹.”

1.3.7 FRENCH SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (F’SATI)

Following the signing of a cooperation agreement between France and South Africa in 1994, an institute was founded in 1996, with the support of two other operators, the Paris Chamber of Commerce on the French side and Technikom Pretoria on the South African side. In 2008, a second site was inaugurated by President Sarkozy at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in Cape Town⁵².

The cooperation is based on double-degree courses (a South African Master’s Degree awarded by Tshwane University of Technology or Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and a French Master of Science from ESIEE Paris or ESIEE Amiens graduate schools of engineering). “Students can then pursue their studies at the doctoral level with jointly supervised doctoral theses to be awarded a South African doctorate and a French doctorate from Paris-Est Créteil Val-de-Marne University (UPEC) or Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines University⁵³”. Since 2009, this cooperation has increased with the opening of a satellite-systems engineering centre, thereby becoming part of aerospace collaboration between France and South Africa.

⁴⁷ Website of the French Embassy in Egypt: <http://www.ambafrance-eg.org/L-Universite-Francaise-d-Egypte> (in French).

⁴⁸ Source: UPSAD website, <http://www.sorbonne.ae/fr/about-us-fr/accreditation-fr/> (in French).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Source: http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2011/03/29/la-pousse-tunisienne-de-paris-dauphine_725116 (in French).

⁵¹ Website of Institut Tunis Dauphine: <http://tunis.dauphine.fr/le-campus-de-tunis/qui-sommes-nous/> (in French).

⁵² Source: <http://www.ambafrance-rsa.org/F-SATI-Institut-de-Technologie> (in French)

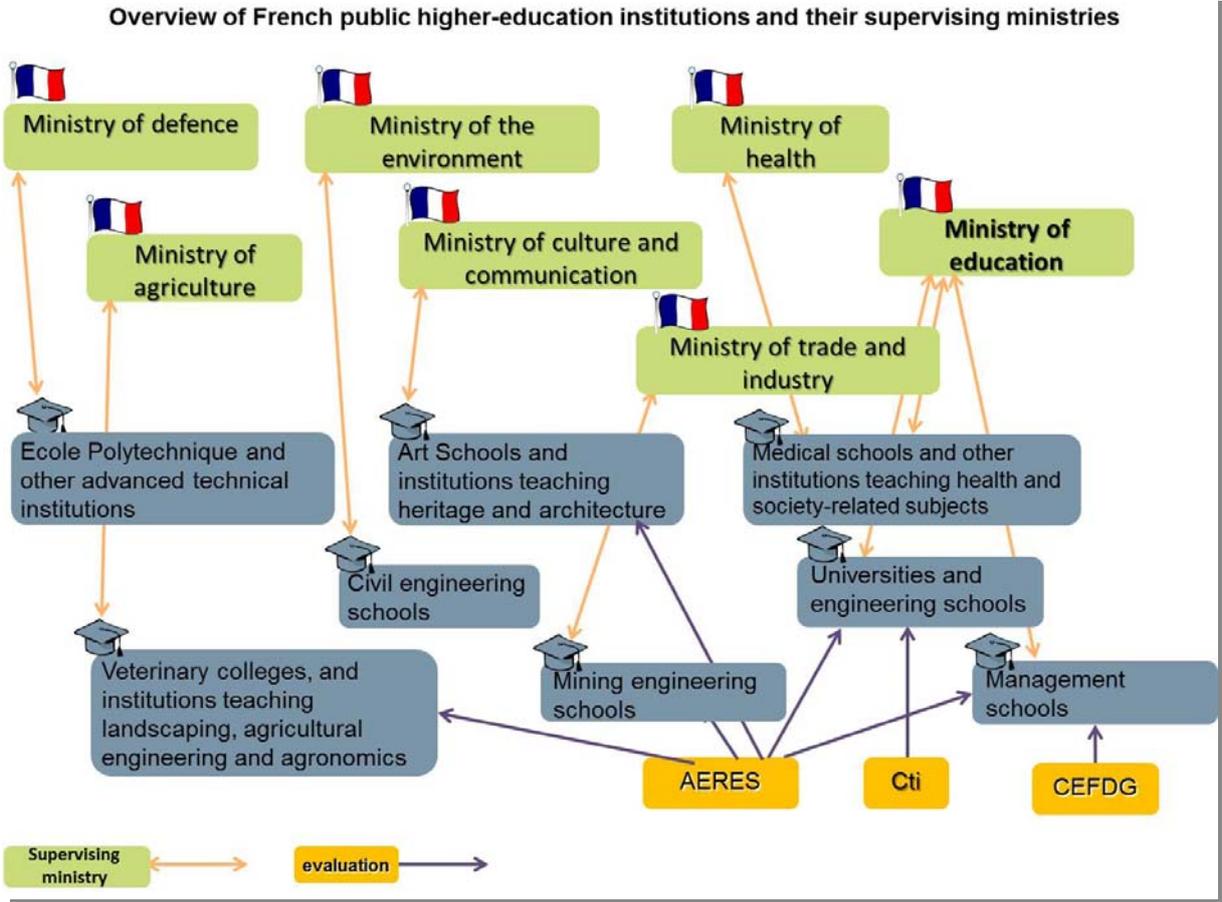
⁵³ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 2 – NATIONAL CONTEXT AND APPROACHES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RECOGNITION OF CROSS-BORDER HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING QUALITY ASSURANCE AND THE RECOGNITION OF CROSS-BORDER PROVISION

2.1.1 HIGHER EDUCATION IN FRANCE

In France, higher education may be independent, public or private. It is complicated to provide an overview of the legal framework (see diagram below). There are several types of institution (universities, engineering schools, management schools, arts schools, etc.) which are supervised by various ministries and academies (such as MESR or the trade and industry ministry, education authorities, etc.) Furthermore, this scene is made more complex by the fact that these institutions are in the process of being regrouped, either as a result of MESR's *investissement d'avenir* investments programme, or due to French Act 2013-660 dated 22 July 2013 (pertaining to higher education and research), which replaces higher education and research clusters with three new forms of grouping: mergers of institutions, associations of institutions, and the community of universities and institutions (called COMUE). The objectives of these plans include better coordination of the research and education offer, to serve excellence partnerships, and increased international visibility.



Given this context, external quality assurance mechanisms also vary a great deal depending on the supervising ministry and the legal nature of institutions and various bodies may be involved. While some assessment principles remain the same (in particular those associated with the European Standards and Guidelines), the criteria and reference documents may vary, especially in the case of cross-border higher education (see below).

2.2. CBHE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, the term “cross-border higher education” is not specifically used, and the idea of international cooperation is more common. Thus, “the MESR, in the context of the contractual policy that governs relationships between the State and autonomous public institutions, invites public higher education institutions to participate in the construction of a European Higher Education and Research Area, to consolidate their international research and doctoral training work, and enhance their presence on the international scene⁵⁴”.

The French Act dated 10 August 2007, pertaining to the freedoms and responsibilities of universities, specifies that “participation in the construction of a European Higher Education and Research Area on the one hand, and international cooperation” on the other, are part of the role of the public higher education service. These objectives have been consolidated by the French Act pertaining to higher education and research dated 23 July 2013⁵⁵, with a new role given to the public higher education service: “the development of courses that include periods of study and activities abroad⁵⁶”.

No specific stress has therefore been put on CBHE as a particular aspect of the internationalisation of higher education. As part of their autonomy, institutions are therefore free to choose the forms of international cooperation that interest them, within the parameters of France’s foreign relations⁵⁷.

In line with this, the national programmes that exist aim to support international cooperation generally⁵⁸, rather than CBHE specifically. The following can be mentioned as examples⁵⁹:

- The MAE and MESR funding programmes for joint-supervision doctoral theses;
- the MESR funding programmes for University Institutes of Technology (IUT) partnerships, (in particular with China, Columbia, Mexico and Venezuela);
- promotion of the creation of university networks, involving France and several partner countries, in association with the MAE cooperation programmes (including the Franco-German

⁵⁴ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56099/la-cooperation-internationale-en-matiere-d-enseignement-superieur.html> (in French).

⁵⁵ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/pid25366/acces-thematique.html?theme=294&subtheme=298> (in French).

⁵⁶ Article 123-7 of the French Education Code.

⁵⁷ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56100/le-cadre-legislatif-et-reglementaire.html> (in French).

⁵⁸ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56109/les-instruments-de-cooperation-internationale.html> (in French).

⁵⁹ See above.

University, the Franco-Italian University⁶⁰, and the Franco-Portuguese programme of University actions called PAULIF);

- “French-style” engineering courses: in Latin America, BRAFITEC has offered Brazilian and French engineering students the opportunity for exchange studies. The model has been extended to Mexico (MEXFITEC), Argentina (ARFITEC) and Chile (CHILIFTEC).

In parallel to these programmes, “the MESR supports and jointly funds the work of the AUF”. “The AUF supports projects that target holistic education in universities in developing countries, inter-university cooperation, good governance, the creation of French-speaking faculties, connected campuses, regional excellence clusters, and mobility (in its mobility programme, AUF has awarded over 2000 grants to master’s and doctoral students, teaching staff and researchers who are studying at or working in an institution that is a member of the AUF)”.

Furthermore, in Asia, “the MESR helps launch the export of engineering courses”, (see Section 1.2).

2.3. NATIONAL GUIDELINES

With regard to the export of cross-border higher education, two legal frameworks exist with differing constraints:

2.3.1 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CROSS-BORDER DEGREES

CBHE is rarely specifically mentioned in French legislation. Its various forms are therefore subject to provisions that apply to all national higher education that leads to a national degree.

When higher education leads to an institutional degree that is not nationally accredited, it is not subject to the rules below or to periodic evaluation by a quality agency.

- French Order dated 22 January 2014, setting the national framework for higher education leading to the award of national degrees of Bachelor’s, Vocational Bachelor’s and Master’s Degrees:

This legislation sets out the general framework for higher education: course consistency, ECTS credits, recognition, validating acquisition and certificates, periods of courses abroad, etc. It also gives more details of what is expected of Master’s Programmes.

A small amount of legislation specifically covers cross-border higher education:

- French Decree 2005-450 dated 11 May 2005, pertaining to the award of degrees under international partnerships

⁶⁰ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid21211/universite-franco-italienne.html> (in French).

This Decree sets out the framework for international partnerships (DPI) for the awarding of degrees, which can be done in two ways: **joint degrees** awarded together or **double degrees** simultaneously awarded by each institution. Joint degrees awarded are fully recognised in France. This should also be the case for the partner country or countries (see Article 4).

This framework is implemented via an **agreement** made between the (French and foreign) institutions, which is valid for the duration of degree accreditation. These degrees are therefore subject to the process of accreditation common to all French degrees, and must therefore be subject to external evaluation.

The agreement, as defined in the decree, must specify:

- methods for teaching and formation of teaching teams,
- methods for checking knowledge and abilities,
- certification methods, in compliance with the quality requirements specified by the French accreditation procedure for awarding the degree concerned,
- methods for enrolling students,
- conditions for balancing the periods of education in the countries concerned,
- methods for assembling the examining board,
- and methods for awarding European credits, and for supporting students in the areas of equipment, pedagogy and languages.

According to Article 6 of the same Decree, “during the national periodic evaluation that follows implementation of the international partnership, a specific report shall be sent to the relevant ministers and evaluation body. This report shall specify the subject of the agreements made, any pedagogical adjustments and the results obtained. The evaluation body shall issue its opinion on the report and on the benefit of pursuing the international partnership. It shall issue recommendations. This position is then taken into account in the accreditation decision, with regard to pursuit of the international partnership. »

- French Order dated 6 January 2005, pertaining to international joint supervision of doctoral theses

This legislation specifies the content of the agreements which provide a framework for international joint supervision of doctoral theses. In particular, they must:

- identify the thesis supervisors in each of the countries concerned, and their responsibilities;
- specify the division of time and responsibilities between the institutions involved;
- specify the methods for assembling the examining board, the language of the thesis, etc.

For other forms of cross-border higher education (the awarding of a local degree, the awarding of an institution’s own degree, campuses abroad, etc.), the autonomy of universities and national sovereignty fully apply, and there is no relevant French legislation.

2.3.2 THE CHARTER OF GOOD PRACTICES THAT APPLIES TO COURSES IMPLEMENTED ABROAD BY FRENCH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

This is a charter⁶¹ drafted in 2009, in the context of an inter-ministerial exercise on the attractiveness of France. Having observed the rise in this type of higher education and the difficulties involved, the objective of this charter was to promote good practices, prior to the opening of these programmes, in the implementation phase and in financial management. Internal and external evaluation systems were planned, with the desire to consider creation of a national certification and a table of indicators to provide a shared reference point. However, this charter is currently little known among higher education providers, and the planned resources have not yet been produced.

2.4 FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

In France, higher education is heavily State subsidised. “The 2014 budget proposal presented by the Government on 25 September 2013 affirms investment for young people and growth based on research and innovation. The higher education and research budget (€23.04bn) is the State's third largest following schools (€64.77bn) and defence (€37.48bn) and has increased for the second year in succession⁶²”.

Several budget programmes directly address international cooperation. “The MESR, in association with operations performed by the MAE via Programme 185 “Cultural and scientific influence”, is pursuing the priority objective of promoting the emergence of institutional frameworks for cooperation and creating synergies between the international actions of the various bodies representing French institutions (CPU - Conference of Universities Presidents, CDEFI - Conference of French Engineering School Directors, ADIUT-Assembly of Technology Institute Directors, and CDIUFM - Conference of Teaching Training School Directors).

Other incentivising actions, performed on the basis of credits from Programme 150 and Programme 172, have mainly been implemented by the division of the education ministry responsible for international relations (the DREIC). Serving a government policy of coordinating national objectives for university cooperation, these actions support the initiatives taken by universities, engineering schools and technology institutes⁶³.”

More specifically, “to breathe life into the 2005 Decree⁶⁴ and promote development of Master’s Programmes under international partnerships, the MESR and the MAE launched calls for projects in a bilateral framework, with six countries (in April 2011): Austria, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the Czech Republic, and more recently Norway, Ukraine, French-speaking communities in Belgium, and Flanders. A programme, which has now terminated, was developed with Poland. This type of initiative is also planned for Sweden, and in the near future, Turkey.

⁶¹ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56099/la-cooperation-internationale-en-matiere-d-enseignement-superieur.html> (in French).

⁶² <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid74022/budget-2014-l-universite-et-la-recherche-en-mouvement.html> (in French).

⁶³ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56109/les-instruments-de-cooperation-internationale.htm> (in French).

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*

The MESR also provides special help for the implementation of university networks or courses in partnership under bilateral agreements: such as the Franco-German University⁶⁵, the Franco-Italian University, and the Franco-Dutch network for higher education⁶⁶.

However, the principle of autonomy gives institutions free choice with regard to their international relations. Therefore, while international cooperation is indeed part of the role of these institutions (see Section 2.2), there are no specific incentives for committing to CBHE.

Institutions that wish to do so have several possibilities:

- allocate finance to CBHE and fund this activity from their own budget;
- turn to public or private partners (such as the Region, Municipality or industrial partners) that are prepared to fund some or all of the project (e.g. *Mahindra Ecole Centrale*);
- benefit from one-off funding from the French government in the context of international cooperation projects (intergovernmental agreements in Vietnam, for example, French-speaking faculties) or the agreements mentioned above;
- benefit from third-country assistance to found campuses abroad or create CBHE (e.g. UPSAD in Abu Dhabi).

Whatever funding package is chosen, it is clear that these activities involve significant costs for prior studies, launch and management. There are many entry barriers, and it can be hard to maintain these investments in the long term. While French institutions seem interested in such education, their budgets may be a hindrance. The financial weight of the institution, and its human resources, is therefore a determining factor for its international commitment. Significant funding differences exist between institutions, which present sources of competitive risks (see Section 4.1).

The financial aspect is also a consideration for the students and teaching staff that benefit from these programmes. Tuition fees may apply to non-EU students who wish to enrol in French courses abroad. Initial enrolment fees on these offshore campuses can also be relatively high.

Several types of grant exist, both for French students who wish to study abroad and for foreign students who wish to pursue their studies in France⁶⁷.

⁶⁵ See Section 1.

⁶⁶ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56057/les-initiatives-de-la-france-dans-l-espace-europeen-de-l-enseignement-superieur.html> (in French).

⁶⁷ For more details on grants see: <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/page/campusbourses-lannuaire-des-programmes-de-bourse> and <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid20712/les-bourses-sur-criteres-sociaux-et-aides-complementaires.html> (both in French).

Chapter 3 - Criteria and guidelines for Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education

3.1 Actors involved in quality assuring exported cross-border education provision

3.1.1 Role of the national agencies

In France, the external quality assurance system for higher education is primarily based on three institutions (CTI, AERES and CEFDG). This is a public system, and evaluation is:

- mandatory for all French institutions with degrees recognised by the State,
- covered by the budget of the quality agency responsible for the evaluation (the institutions do not pay directly for the evaluation).

Role and missions of the CTI

The *Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur* (CTI) is an independent body whose missions are set by articles L.642-3 and following of the French Education Code and was formed by the French Act of 10 July 1934 pertaining to the conditions of award and use of the *ingénieur diplômé* degree (French qualified engineer).

The CTI's missions include, in particular:

- evaluating and accrediting all French engineering schools that wish to be certified for awarding *ingénieur diplômé* degrees. State institutions are certified by the relevant Government Ministry (or Ministries) on the basis of a CTI opinion. Private institutions are certified by the relevant Government Ministry (or Ministries) on decision of the CTI;
- evaluating and accrediting foreign institutions that award foreign engineering diplomas and degrees, at their request. The opinion resulting from accreditation may also lead to these degrees being accepted by the French State, at the request of the relevant Governments. This is granted by the French Minister responsible for Higher Education;
- producing opinions on all issues associated with *ingénieur diplômé* degrees. The CTI specifically sets out the criteria and procedures required for the fulfilment of its missions, in particular the awarding of engineering degrees. It contributes to the continuous improvement of engineering training courses and their inclusion in the European and International Higher Education Area⁶⁸.

"The CTI is therefore legally and in practice the key body involved in accreditation and therefore certification of engineering training courses⁶⁹."

At an international level, the CTI is a "fully-fledged member of the European bodies responsible for quality assurance in Higher Education, the accreditation of training courses, and in particular the

⁶⁸ <http://www.cti-commission.fr/Missions-de-la-CTI> (in French)

⁶⁹ Extract from References and Orientations 2009, approved in the conference of 6-7 January 2009

accreditation of engineering training courses⁷⁰.” Such bodies include ENQA, EQAR, ECA and ENAEE. It is also involved in evaluating a number of programmes abroad.

With regard to campuses abroad, CTI's role needs to be understood ⁷¹:

- double degrees - the CTI sets the guidelines and procedures expected for the degree and “subsequently examines double degree agreements as part of the periodical accreditation⁷²”;
- joint degrees - the CTI is “primarily involved in this type of partnership when a joint programme is included in a planned engineering degree for a French institution⁷³”; “the object of CTI certification is the overall engineering course⁷⁴” and “joint engineering programmes may be subject to specific certification⁷⁵”;
- for accreditations abroad with regard to acceptance by the French State: under international agreements or at the request of foreign institutions, the CTI may “evaluate and accredit their training course with a view to acceptance of their degrees by the French Government.⁷⁶”

Role and missions of AERES

The *Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur* (AERES, the French agency for the evaluation of higher education and research) was created by the 2006 French framework Act for research and has been operating as an independent administrative authority since March 2007. According to article L114-3-1 of the French Research Code, AERES is responsible for:

“1 Evaluating all missions and activities of research organisations and institutions, research and higher education institutions, scientific cooperation foundations and institutions, and the French National Research Agency;

2 Evaluating the research activities conducted by the research units of the organisations and institutions mentioned under point 1, which the Agency either does directly or with the support of the research organisations and institutions, according to procedures that it has approved;

3 Evaluating the programmes and degrees offered by higher education institutions;

4 Approving the staff evaluation procedures of the organisations and institutions mentioned under point 1, and giving its opinion on the conditions under which they are implemented.

It may also take part in evaluating foreign or international research and higher education organisations, under European or international cooperation programmes or at the request of the competent authorities”.

⁷⁰ <http://www.cti-commission.fr/Nos-references-internationales> (in French)

⁷¹ See section 3.

⁷² References and orientations CTI T2.E.5.3.1

⁷³ CTI reference framework T2.E.5.4.1

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ CTI reference framework T1.A.2.2.3

The evaluation missions of AERES therefore cover not only France, but have a European and international dimension – for example, the agency is a member of ENQA and is listed on the EQAR register.

Furthermore, this international dimension was reaffirmed in the AERES strategic plan that was updated in 2012-2014. The AERES European and international strategy is structured around three areas⁷⁷, including the evaluation of foreign agencies and institutions.

However, a distinction should be drawn between:

- evaluations of institutions and foreign courses performed at the request of the interested parties or under a contract won; for this work, AERES uses a specific reference framework⁷⁸ for evaluation, and may issue an opinion on accreditation (cf. Armenia, Saudi Arabia);
- degrees awarded by French institutions abroad; this may involve a national degree issued by the institution alone, or a double or joint degree. For this evaluation work, AERES works on the basis of the French institution's declarations in its self-evaluation file during its five-yearly evaluation. The institution may state that it awards degrees abroad or that it has joint degrees. When evaluating a double or joint degree, AERES focuses on domestic aspects⁷⁹.
- offshore campuses, which AERES does not currently evaluate.

Finally, we note that French Act no.2013-660 dated 22 July 2013 pertaining to higher education and research replaces AERES with the French High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES). This will become effective when the relevant Decree is published by the Council of State as per article L. 114-3-6 of the French research code. The property, rights and obligations of AERES shall be transferred to HCERES.

c) Role and missions of the CEFDG

“Once they have been recognised by the State, business schools can award degrees endorsed by the French Ministry for Higher Education and Research following evaluation by a national body, the *Commission d'Evaluation des Formations et Diplômes de Gestion (CEFDG)*”(…).

“The CEFDG is responsible for checking the quality of courses offered, and makes proposals to the Minister for granting authorisation to award endorsed degrees. Only the courses featured on the www.cefdg.fr website are authorised by the MESR to award degrees on behalf of the State, and grant Master’s degrees⁸⁰.”

3.1.2 Role of other actors

a) The *Agence universitaire de la francophonie*:

⁷⁷ AERES European and international strategy objectives, Board meeting of 13/09/2012.

⁷⁸ See section 3.

⁷⁹ *Idem*.

⁸⁰ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid49085/les-etablissements-enseignement-superieur-prives.html> (in French)

This association of higher education and research institutions has been *La Francophonie's* operating agency for higher education and research since 1989⁸¹. In addition to supporting French-speaking courses (see above), the AUF has launched a new initiative which aims to identify “truly international⁸²” courses and evaluate the range of French-speaking courses in the Asia-Pacific region, via its *Bureau Asie-Pacifique*. The IT Master’s course of the *Institut de la Francophonie pour l’Informatique* (IFI) at the Vietnam National University in Hanoi was the first to be awarded certification on this basis on 21 July 2014.

b) Associations or networks that award certification:

This concerns international players that manage certification; they are not specifically French, but French higher education institutions may apply for these certifications.

For example:

- The European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), accredits business and management schools and awards EQUIS accreditation⁸³. Sixteen French institutions⁸⁴ are currently EQUIS accredited.
- ENAEE (European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education): this network allows quality agencies in engineering to award the EUR-ACE⁸⁵ label. In France, the CTI is “accredited for awarding the label to courses it certifies⁸⁶”.

3.2 CBHE criteria, methods or procedures in place

3.2.1 CTI criteria, methods and Procedures

Institutions must be certified by the MESR or another supervising ministry for awarding *ingénieur diplômé* degrees, subject to an opinion from the CTI. This opinion is the result of the CTI evaluation by a group of experts (CTI members, international experts and expert students) involving a visit and documentation. This procedure ends with a vote in plenary session of the commission and transfer to the MESR for certification of degrees⁸⁷.

The CTI has followed European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) recommendations, particularly with regard to a self-evaluation prior to the evaluation and a deployment of principles and criteria⁸⁸. For courses abroad, the three main evaluation criteria are as follows:

- “T1B.3.4 Double degree and joint degree courses:

⁸¹ <http://www.auf.org/auf/en-bref/> (in French)

⁸² <http://www.auf.org/bureau-asie-pacifique/actualites-regionales/comment-identifier-une-formation-internationale/> (in French)

⁸³ <http://www.efmd.org/index.php/accreditation-main/equis>

⁸⁴ <http://www.efmd.org/index.php/accreditation-main/equis/accredited-schools>

⁸⁵ <http://www.enaee.eu/eur-ace-system>

⁸⁶ <http://www.cti-commission.fr/-EUR-ACE,190-> (in French)

⁸⁷ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid20194/les-formations-d-ingenieur.html#habilitation-delivrance-titre-ingenieur> (in French)

⁸⁸ See CTI References and orientations, Tome 1 and Tome 2

- The institution is developing double degree and joint degree courses with a view to the internationalisation of courses and under current agreements.
- These degrees comply with the national and international criteria that define them.
- They increase the international mobility of students and consolidate the institution's international network."

More specifically,

- for double degrees, section T2.E.5.3.1 sets out the following criteria:
 - the course must include periods of study in both institutions;
 - these periods may vary for students from the different countries;
 - it is important to find a balance in terms of flows and time spent in both institutions;
 - the period of study shall be determined in such a way as to comply with the rules for awarding each degree. The programme followed must make it possible to acquire the skills for both degrees. The CTI strongly recommends the overall length of study being prolonged by at least one semester, which will in particular make it easier for student engineers to adapt to the culture of their host country;
 - the course is governed by an agreement which states training objectives, the skills sought by each of the institutions, the programmes followed by students from both institutions, course content and methods (semesters, ECTS, Diploma Supplement, etc.), conditions for being awarded both degrees and recruitment and enrolment procedures;
 - the target English level is C1, the minimum requirement is B2, which must be certified during the engineering course by external certification;
 - level B2 in French is recommended for foreign students;
 - with regard to award of the French degree, the CTI considers that student engineers must be present in the French institution awarding the engineering degree for a minimum of 3 semesters during the final 3 years, with at least one semester of additional industrial work placement. This work placement may take place in France, in the partner country or in a third country. It is subject to the French institution, and, if required, in collaboration with the foreign partner.
- for joint degrees, section T2.E.5.4.2 sets out the criteria below:
 - they must comply with the CTI general criteria;
 - course duration must be the same as a normal degree (no study extensions);
 - the joint section of the course must be in the final years of the programme;
 - the course must be run to a significant extent by the institution certified by the CTI for awarding engineering degrees;
 - the course must be governed by an agreement between the two institutions which sets out methods for teaching, the formation of teaching teams, the skills

sought by each of the institutions and their assessment procedures and enrolment procedures for students. It must also set out the conditions for balancing the periods of education in the countries concerned and determines methods for assembling the examining board, awarding European credits and methods for providing material, educational and linguistic support for students;

- the course must also be certified in the partner countries, which could be done jointly, by the appropriate bodies;
- the course certified by the CTI must cover the whole engineering training course (i.e. 10 semesters after award of the French baccalaureate). A specific statement of the skills required for admissions from semester 5 and an attestation of the level required must be provided (as for the French institution programme organised over 3 years). The part of the course that is “joint” must be specifically described;
- the degree (or degrees) must be awarded to all students by a single examining board for both institutions;
- the target English level is C1, the minimum requirement is B2, which must be certified during the course by external certification;
- level B2 in French is recommended for foreign students;
- given that this is a joint course, the rule of a minimum of 3 semesters in the French institution could be relaxed in cases where the need is substantiated;
- the training course must include at least one semester of work placement; this work placement may take place in France in the partner country (or countries) or in a third country. It is subject to the French institution, and, if required, in collaboration with the foreign partner.

3.2.2 AERES criteria, methods and Procedures

The overall method used by AERES is based on the principles set out in the European Standards and Guidelines. According to section 3.7, *External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies*:

“The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- a self-evaluation or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;
- an external evaluation by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and site visits as decided by the agency;

- publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;”

So all evaluation procedures carried out by AERES are based on this methodology: self-evaluation, evaluation, publication of report.

The evaluation criteria pertaining or applicable to CBHE are:

A) for evaluation of courses

Double or joint degree courses are evaluated according to the same framework as national courses. This framework⁸⁹ includes the following criteria:

- consistency of the course with the training objectives,
- positioning of the course within its institution, geographical area, research environment and socio-economic environment,
- educational team, and the involvement of professionals and research players, steering of the course,
- numbers of students and results in terms of success, those going on to further studies and employment,
- the place of research, preparing students for the workplace, projects and work placements, international links, recruitment, pathways and systems to support success, teaching methods, the place of digital technologies, assessment of students, monitoring of skills acquisition, monitoring of graduates, advising board and self-evaluation procedure.

B) for evaluation of institutions

Two sections of the reference framework cover the internationalisation of courses⁹⁰:

- the ‘Research and training’ section - international courses that the institution is involved in are handled in the same way as other courses. The evaluation criteria are as follows:
 - Field 2: Initial and continuing training policy
 - Reference 1: the institution’s training policy is a key aspect of its strategy
 - Reference 2: the institution’s strategic choices are effective, thanks to the quality of training activity steering and organisation
 - Reference 3: the institution monitors and publishes its results, and implements high-quality internal evaluation and management systems

⁸⁹ See document “*Évaluation externe des formations licence, licence professionnelle et master des établissements de la vague A Campagne d’évaluation 2014 – 2015* (External evaluation of Bachelor’s Degree, Vocational Bachelor’s Degree and Master’s Degree courses for Group A institutions – Evaluation campaign 2014-2015)”, January 2014, AERES.

⁹⁰ See document “*Évaluation des établissements : référentiel de l’évaluation externe* (Evaluation of institutions: reference framework for external evaluation)”, January 2014, AERES.

- the 'European and international relations' section, more specifically. The evaluation criteria are as follows:
 - Field 1: European and international relations in research and higher education
 - Reference 1: a European and international policy has been defined, implemented and monitored
 - ✓ A European and international policy has been defined as part of the institution's strategy. It is connected to the policies of its main partners, and contributes to promoting the image of the geographical area.
 - ✓ The European and international policy is steered by management and brings together the institution's main bodies on the basis of a clear definition of the roles of the various players involved; it ensures consistency across the cooperation actions performed in research and training, and ensures that they are coordinated.
 - ✓ The institution knows about the cooperation actions carried out within it, has the tools required for monitoring them, and mobilises appropriate means of support.
 - ✓ The institution is part of the European Higher Education Area and is developing the international dimension of its courses.
 - ✓ The institution encourages and supports international mobility both for French students and staff wishing to move abroad, or foreign students and staff who wish to come to France.
 - Reference 2: policy methods comply with research and training needs
 - ✓ The institution manages the operation of its courses abroad, and has the resources to guarantee their quality.

3.2.3 CEFDG criteria, methods and Procedures

The evaluation process involves four stages:

- each application is examined (including training self-evaluation) by two "reporters" appointed from within the commission;
- there is a hearing before the commission and discussion;
- the commission issues its opinion;
- the institution is informed of the Ministry's decision by the DGESIP.

The commission bases its course assessment on the following main criteria:

- the training process;
- good governance and organisation of the institution;
- human, material and financial resources;
- academic resources in terms of permanent teaching staff;
- research activities and contribution to the furtherance of knowledge;
- consistency with the employment market (employment opportunities);
- international links.

With regard to international links, the following precision is given: “Learners must have spent at least 4 to 6 months abroad, as part of a work placement or theoretical course, across the whole programme.”

The reference framework also covers the opening of new training sites in France or abroad. Before the course is extended to a new site, the institution must first inform the commission, at least one year before the new site is opened. It shall specify, in particular, the bases for the project and the resources involved.

The commission shall give its opinion on the operation of the site at least one year after it opens. Furthermore, in the event that an institution opens a site abroad, the authorisation from the host country must be attached to the application.

3.3 Role of international guidelines (OECD-UNESCO Guidelines and the ESG) on national approaches to QA of CBHE

The OECD-UNESCO guidelines for quality assurance in higher education are little known and used as such in France, whether by successive Governments, quality agencies or French higher education institutions. It goes without saying that most of the principles stated in them are, in reality, covered by the various players concerned.

Reference to the ESG is more widespread. The system is presented on the MESR⁹¹ website. AERES⁹² and the CTI⁹³ refer to them on their websites, and use them in their reference frameworks⁹⁴.

⁹¹ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid56043/presentation-de-l-e.e.e.s.html> (in French)

⁹² <http://www.aeres-evaluation.com/Agency/Presentation/Profile-of-the-Agency>

⁹³ <http://www.cti-commission.fr/Les-ESG-European-Standards-and> (in French)

⁹⁴ For the CTI, see especially References and Orientations Tome 2, T2B5.4.1, and for AERES, see especially the reference framework for external evaluation of institutions, 2013-2014 Campaign, Group E, p. 3.

Chapter 4 – Main obstacles and challenges of Cross-Border Higher Education and its Quality Assurance

4.1 For agencies

The main problem for French agencies is the lack of centrally collected information with regard to the number and nature of courses exported.

It is possible to talk about the French higher education system as a whole, but analysing it requires wading through the multiplicity of supervisory bodies and organisational differences depending on the various disciplines or levels: art and architecture schools come under the French Ministry of Culture, nursing schools come under the French Ministry of Health, etc. (see Diagram p.14).

Despite the many sources available, obtaining an ‘overall’ vision of higher education exported turned out to be impossible during our study.

Furthermore, most of the information gathered was based on declarations. While the issue of ‘foreign partnerships’ is identified in the information communicated by the institutions, the nature of these partnerships is harder to interpret. It is sometimes impossible to differentiate between joint degrees, double degrees, degrees abroad or basic cooperation partnerships for a programme. What is more, from one institution to another, the understanding and naming of these types of course do not always reflect the same reality.

At the end of the day, we are left with a key question: “Who is responsible for the quality assurance of CBHE?”

French agencies are responsible, as stated in the legal texts, for evaluating higher education institution courses and degrees. Are they, however, mandated for evaluating courses abroad? Who should pay the costs associated with these evaluations? Furthermore, in this framework, it is difficult for a French agency to act alone. It may be necessary to envisage new, more automatically applicable, cooperation mechanisms between agencies or authorities in the host country and the country where the course originates.

The specific case of *Diplômes Universitaires* (DU) is even more relevant for courses abroad. In France, DUs are awarded by the higher education institution, as opposed to national degrees issued by the French Ministry, are not subject to periodic external evaluation. DUs awarded by French institutions abroad are therefore not evaluated by AERES. For these courses, universities are free to set the level of tuition fees (in contrast to national degrees). They are therefore a major financial lever for universities. They are also generally financially independent, as they are funded by tuition fees.

Since they do not require financial support from a supervising ministry in order for these programmes to operate, they are not subject to the quality assurance of a periodic evaluation.

4.2 For institutions

The first challenge which institutions much face is student demand. France is both one of the leading countries in the world for hosting foreign students (3rd host country in the world in 2012 according to UNESCO⁹⁵), but also a country whose students are generally mobile, in comparison to our neighbours. So in terms of students going abroad from France in 2006, outside the Erasmus programme, with 54,000 students enrolled abroad, “France is third, after Germany and Japan. If we include students on the Erasmus programme, that puts France second in the world, behind Germany and ahead of Japan. Comparing international mobility rates attenuates this healthy position slightly, but does not contradict it⁹⁶”.

Institutions will therefore be faced with the need to meet this demand, which is also set to keep growing. Students going abroad used to go mainly to European countries, but this is now becoming more diverse, with many going to Scandinavia or the Pacific countries⁹⁷. French institutions have therefore not only increased their range of partnership degrees, but also multiplied the countries with which they wished to reach agreements. Managing and making these agreements a reality is also a challenge.

If institutions are left to their own devices in this area, they are required to do preparatory work, day-to-day management and follow-up which require the investment of both human and financial resources (see above). Once that is the case, the institutions are no longer playing on a level playing field.

These inequalities risk creating competition between institutions, universities and private colleges and French and foreign educational establishments. However, for the moment, the market approach that dominates among some of our neighbours is not the approach used for French institutions.

Finally, while it has been possible for institutions to be historically focussed on French-speaking countries or associated with our French colonial past, other countries are now showing interest in these markets. French institutions will therefore probably need to keep a close eye on the quality and reputation of their courses in order to keep these partnerships alive. The search for new destinations and ways of exporting French courses abroad is also a challenge for these institutions.

⁹⁵ <http://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/cid80133/la-france-3e-pays-le-plus-attractif-pour-les-etudiants-etrangers.html> (in French)

⁹⁶ In “*La mobilité sortante des étudiants français : éléments de mise en perspective* (French students going abroad for study – putting it in perspective)”, *Les Notes de CampusFrance*, no.14, July 2008, Solange Pisarz, Etienne Cazin, http://ressources.campusfrance.org/publi_institu/agence_cf/notes/fr/note_14_fr.pdf (in French)

⁹⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 5 – Good practice examples

We can mention a few examples of procedures set up by AERES in terms of CBHE good practice.

In 2012, AERES worked on producing a specific procedure for the evaluation of international partnership courses (double and joint degrees). The evaluation guide was built on existing reference frameworks for courses at AERES, as well as partner agencies in Europe, and included partnership criteria called “jointness criteria”, which were set up as part of the JOQAR European programme, in particular. This procedure was applied in the evaluation of the *Erasmus Mundus* “Europhilosophie” Master’s course in February 2013, an evaluation performed at the request of the University of Toulouse II – Le Mirail, in partnership with the German agency, the *Agentur für Qualitätssicherung durch Akkreditierung von Studiengängen* (AQAS), with a view to having this course accredited by the agency. Significant work – based on documentation and a site visit – was performed between January and April 2013, which led to AERES proposing without reservations to AQAS that this *Erasmus Mundus* Master’s course be accredited for 5 years. AQAS followed the AERES recommendations.

Furthermore, demand in the area of evaluation and accreditation of courses abroad is continually growing, not only for French courses, but also international ones. AERES was approached by the Chinese agency CEAIE in 2013 with a view to performing joint evaluations of French courses in China. The Sino-French Institute of Nuclear Engineering and Technology at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou was identified as an institution that could be subject to this kind of institutional evaluation in 2014 or 2015, together with a course at this institution. Since this involves engineering courses, AERES is collaborating with the CTI for this mission. The project is underway, and began with the French and Chinese agencies exchanging reference frameworks and the drawing up (by AERES) of a common reference framework which complies with ESG standards and adapts the Chinese reference framework to these standards. Once this reference framework has been approved, the next stage will involve gathering a mixed committee of French and Chinese experts, getting the Sino-French Institute of Nuclear Engineering and Technology to perform a self-evaluation, asking the experts to examine the paperwork, and carrying out a site visit before the experts submit their report. This evaluation will take place in 2015.